

Dear Chancellor Syverud,

Hundreds of Black and Latino alumni write today to express our dismay in the administration's handling of the recent racist incidents and hate crimes on campus.

We write to emphasize:

1. The SU administration's handling of recent racist incidents has been poorly executed, and reflective of past missteps by the SU administration;
2. We request that the SU administration create a diversity and inclusion plan/programs/events to specifically address the culture of intolerance on campus. This plan could be launched as a yearlong series of workshops, trainings and events to that end. We request that the administration go back to review past requests made by Black students (2014 for example) and others on diversity, and we request that the SU administration includes alumni feedback on this project from Black, Latino, Asian, Jewish, and others of color to create and build a better and more tolerant SU community;
3. We support the current Black student protestors, and their allies, including staff and faculty.

We are members of The Friends of SU, The SU Posse, The DC Orange & Blue Crew, L.A.N.S.U. and other alumni of color and our allies. We represent about 3,000+ Black and Latino alumni.

Many of us have children and family that currently attend SU, and we are disappointed with Syracuse University's initial response to the racist incidents. That the university was slow to publicly report the first incident(s) is problematic. The safety of all students begins with awareness, and everyone on campus should have been immediately notified at the time of the first incident.

We also submit that the SU administration's decision to suspend all fraternity activities is a misstep and does not address the primary racism issues at hand. This action penalizes the majority of fraternities that are not involved in the despicable behavior, and unfortunately Black and Latino fraternities are also penalized. This decision, we feel, is unfortunate and short-sided. Penalizing all fraternities for the actions of a few is smoke and mirrors tactic.

The diversity training for fraternities recently announced by the administration is fine and noble to do, but also an immediate distraction regarding what the focus should be right now. The primary action that SU administration should be undertaking at this time is to hold the perpetrators of all the recent crimes and incidents accountable, and to amplify its commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus community. We believe announcing training this week and a suspension of all fraternity activities is not the right action. However, the administration could roll that training into a yearlong plan to address the climate of intolerance on campus.

It should be noted that we give our full support to the current Black student protestors, staff, faculty, allies and all the supporters of the #notagainSU movement.

Since the 1960's many of us have witnessed incidents of hate, bias and racist actions like the nearly dozen racist reports on campus in recent weeks. It is our empathy and desire to protect future students that drives us to write to you today. The climate of intolerance and hate has permeated our SU campus community for decades and it must stop. The culture of intolerance breeds itself beyond the recent 10 racist actions. Your administration must send a strong signal that intolerance and hate are not permitted on the Syracuse University campus, and you must address these issues in an inclusive way.

We know the racial climate of intolerance has not changed 30-plus years at SU, and it will continue to bubble up in the future if there is not a more calculated effort to stop it. SU has a history of sweeping incidents like these under the rug without tangible solutions and strong targeted and inclusive actions.

We request of the administration to roll out at the start of next semester, a one-year plan to address the culture of intolerance, bias, racial inequity and hate on campus. Members of our groups are available to work with you on this project.

The first order of business on the other side of these incidents must be for Syracuse University to foster a climate of equity and inclusion.

This is the core of our ask today and we believe it's possible.

We, as Black and Latino alumni and allies, are among the university's greatest supporters of funds, scholarships, and other initiatives that benefit the current student population. We also work tirelessly to recruit diverse students to SU.

We are certain that you understand that this is an important moment not just for the SU community but for the alumni community as well as the greater higher education community. We as individuals are assessing our relationship with our beloved alma mater and aforementioned donation and recruiting efforts. We want to be proud of SU's true commitment to diversity.

We look forward to working with you and look forward to your feedback. Please contact our representative, Benjamin I. Green '08, to discuss how we may engage with you further on these important issues and to help change the SU campus culture to one that is more tolerant, positive, inclusive and supportive for all.

Sincerely,

Benjamin I. Green – FSU (Friends of SU)
Anthony Otero '96 – Latino Alumni Network of SU (L.A.N.S.U.)
Amber Dowlton – DC Orange & Blue Crew
Joe Cruz
Andrew Manns
Sarah J. Glover
Wesley C. Dias

If you are concerned about the current issues going on and would like to add your name to our